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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY GRATION MEETS WITH SOUTHERN SUDAN  
OPPOSITION PARTIES

11. (SBU) Summary: In a November 4 meeting U.S. Special Envoy (SE) General Scott Gration met with representatives of opposition political parties from Southern Sudan. The representatives expressed concerns regarding elections, the referendum and the recent parliamentary boycott. They appealed to the SE to assist in opening a dialogue and to mediate discussion between the less powerful political parties and the SPLM. End Summary.

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Concerns Regarding SPLM and Elections  
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12. (SBU) SE Gration stressed that the election is not just between two parties, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the SPLM, but rather for the entire country of Sudan. He emphasized to a group of 14 opposition party leaders the importance that all political parties participate. The group included, among others, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement for Democratic Change (SPLM-DC), Sudan National African Union (SANU), United Democratic Party (UDP), South Sudan Democratic Forum (SSDF), Union of African Parties-Two (USAP-2), and United Democratic Salvation Front (UDSF).

13. (SBU) Opposition party leaders raised concerns that the SPLM talks only to the Government of National Unity (GNU) in the north. The southern opposition parties feel marginalized, and they claimed that voter registration for next year's election, which opened on November 1, is proceeding slowly in the south. They said that confusion and lack of trust in the SPLM-led Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) had caused a low and tardy turnout thus far. They are convinced the SPLM will not allow free and fair elections and claimed that citizens will therefore not invest in a process that they view as already tainted.

14. (SBU) The United Democratic Front (UDF) and others expressed concerns that opposition parties are not free to fully participate in the political process in the south. They noted disruption of campaigning efforts, harassment, and even reportedly physical beatings by the SPLM. Opposition parties believe that many of the current problems with the political process, including census results that did not favor the South, are due to SPLM weaknesses. Agreeing that elections must be held, they nonetheless worried that the current political situation in Southern Sudan may make this difficult.

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Referendum  
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15. (SBU) The opposition parties roundly blamed the SPLM for holding up progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) by making popular consultations and the Abyei referendum conditions to forward movement, effectively making Southern Sudan

hostage to issues outside its territory that are political issues for the SPLM.

¶16. (SBU) The group did not feel it would be a problem to attain a two-thirds turnout for the referendum vote, but some expressed distrust about accurate accounting of votes cast in parts of Sudan outside the south. One party representative insisted the vote should be limited to the south. (Note: This was the initial position of the SPLM as well. End Note.)

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Boycott Is Not The Solution  
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¶17. (SBU) Therasa Siricio Iro, State Minister of Environment and Physical Development and SANU Deputy Party Head said the recent parliamentary boycott by the SPLM is not a solution. She called for the southern parties to resolve differences inside the system and noted that the boycott prevents passage of laws essential to the welfare of the south. She believes the boycott serves only to silence the Southern Sudan political voice.

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Requests for SE Mediation  
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¶18. (SBU) The SANU Party Deputy Head said Southern Sudan needs to create a roadmap for its future, because if nothing is done, Southern Sudan is on a collision course with renewed conflict. She lamented that the ruling party had failed to provide democratic

KHARTOUM 00001280 002 OF 002

transformation and good governance and therefore peaceful elections and a referendum for self-determination are not currently possible.

¶19. (SBU) All agreed that to find a way forward, they need assistance with starting a dialogue with the SPLM. They asked for SE Gration's assistance in opening a dialogue with the SPLM and for his mediation to foster open discussion.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: Many of those present were either defectors from the SPLM, including Lam Akol, or from rump parties created by the NCP with limited following in the South. Some of their complaints nonetheless ring true. End Comment.

¶11. SE Gration has cleared this message.

WHITEHEAD